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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage December 1 on the city mayors' and county magistrates' elections around the island, which are scheduled to be held on December 5. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" discussed U.S. President Barack Obama's plan to wind down operations in Iraq while possibly boosting troop levels in Afghanistan. The article concluded by urging "every nation in the world to get in on this fight" in Afghanistan by sending troops, contributing money or providing other assistance. End summary.

"Afghanistan, Terrorism Is Everybody's Problem"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (12/1):

"The United States has been criticized over the years for acting as if it were the world's policeman. The U.S. has had a mixed experience with nation-building or rebuilding. ... Today, U.S. President Barack Obama is winding down operations in Iraq while quite possibly boosting troop levels in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is now being called Obama's war, but unless the entire international community realizes that this conflict is a global problem, it may be very difficult to bring even a semblance of normalcy to this troubled region. For those of us in Taiwan, accustomed to the strict confines of an island nation, the idea of a porous border is a little hard to fathom. There is no place where Pakistan ends and Afghanistan begins, except on paper. For its part, Afghanistan has not had a stable government of any kind for decades. To be fair to the U.S., if any nation could be blamed for the current situation in Afghanistan it's the former USSR. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, destroyed much of the nation's functioning infrastructure and activated tribal militias, laying the framework for today's crisis. The U.S. is not blameless, however, having supplied the anti-Soviet rebels with weapons, and when the conflict was over, unfortunately forgot about the people and those weapons. ...

"Nations all around the world are watching the U.S.' battle for Afghanistan. Some continue to accuse the U.S. of imperialism. Others criticize the methodology. But few aside from Great Britain have actually done anything to contribute. ... The U.S. and a few allies have been fighting there for over eight years. The American public has no more energy for an expensive conflict, especially if it seems endless. U.S. President Obama seems less inclined to invoke the 'with-us-or-against-us' demand made by his predecessor, but a consensus seems to be growing that the rest of the world needs to step up to the plate. Obama's political team may have stopped using the term 'war on terror,' but the reality is the U.S. military is trying to defeat Islamic extremists that are overwhelmingly responsible for inspiring the sorrow and carnage many nations of the world have suffered over the past decade. China has been singled out for criticism as it has business and commercial interests in Afghanistan and the surrounding area, but is loath to actually join the fight against extremism. For political reasons, it's unlikely that China will be sending any troops anywhere soon, but every

nation in the world needs to get in on this fight. Those who can send troops should do so. Others can contribute money or provide other assistance. America isn't perfect, but what's the rest of the world doing to help defeat extremism?"

STANTON